

REMARKS

The Non-Final Office Action, mailed June 19, 2008, considered claims 33-40 and 44-48. Claims 33, 37-39 and 44-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 6,322,451 B1) and in view of Kim (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0013811 A1) and further in view of Sen et al. (U.S. Patent 6,845,389 B1). Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker, Miura, Kim and Sen, and further in view of Neuman et al. "Kerberos: An Authentication Service for Computer Networks". Claims 35-36 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker, Miura, Kim and Sen, and further in view of Perlman (U.S. Patent 5,586,257).

By this response, claims 33, 37, 38, and 44-48 are amended.¹ Claims 33-40 and 44-48 remain pending, of which claims 33, 37, and 38 are independent.

The pending claims are generally directed to embodiments for initiating peer-to-peer communications within a multiplayer game and in such a way as to cause the peer-to-peer communications to bypass the game server that is hosting the multiplayer game. These communications include voice communications. A primary goal of the invention is to provide a list of trusted players to minimize the risk that players will be exposed to inappropriate communications once peer-to-peer communications are established. The method recited in claim 1, for example, includes a server hosting a multiplayer game session and requiring each person requesting to play in the multiplayer game session to first enroll in a game service operated by the game server. Then, each player attempting to play in the multiplayer game is authenticated by determining if each corresponding player is enrolled in the game service and has approved credentials, and so that only people who have enrolled in the game service and approved credentials are allowed to access the multiplayer game session as a player. To have approved credentials, each player must agree to a community policy that prohibits sexually explicit communications.² A player that is authenticated and that has accessed the multiplayer game is then provided a list identifying at least one other player that is authenticated and that is enabled to communicate with the first player in a peer-to-peer network

¹ Support for these amendments may be found on pages 1-5, and 17-18.

² Support for this limitation may be found on page 17, lines 16-18.

connection. This list represents those who have agreed to abide by the community policy.³ The player then selects another player from the list, which constitutes a request for communication information corresponding to the second player and that is required to establish the peer-to-peer connection between the first player and the second player and that includes at least an IP address of the second player. In response to the request, the communication information comprising at least the IP address corresponding to the second player is then transmitted from the game server to the first player, wherein the first player, upon receiving the communication information, uses the received communication information to initiate a peer-to-peer communication with the second player. If the attempt is successful, the peer-to-peer communication can then successfully bypass the game server. Finally, in response to the first player receiving an inappropriate communication from the second player, a notification is sent which causes the second player to be removed from the list and banned from subsequent multiplayer games hosted on the server.

The elements of the method recited in claim 33 are also found in the other independent claims, and hence all of the dependent claims. For example, the computer program product recited in claim 37 comprises instructions for implementing the method recited in claim 1, as does the system recited in claim 38.

Claim Objections

Claims 33, 37, 38, and 44-48 were objected to for various informalities. The suggested amendments have been made to each of these claims.

Prior Art Rejections

Each of the independent claims was rejected as being obvious in view of the cited art as detailed above. In view of the current amendments, however, Applicant submits that these references fail to teach or suggest each limitation of the independent claims.

As indicated in the office action, Walker, Miura, and Kim do not disclose a peer-to-peer network connection initiated by the first player, as claimed. Although, Sen, as indicated, does

³ Support for this amendment may be found on page 19, lines 12-27, and page 32, lines 17-21. For example, a limited authenticated user may be given access to certain sessions to which it is authorized. Other users authorized for these sessions may be provided in a list for the player to select (page 19). If a user violates the community policy, the user will be banned from accessing the session, or in other words, that banned player would no longer be provided in the list of users that are authorized to play in the session. See pages 18, 32.

disclose establishing communications directly between the two players of a game, these communications are limited to input and movement messages, or game play messages, rather than voice communications. See col. 6, lines 54-64. As such, these messages could not violate a community policy, and therefore, Sen fails to teach or suggest communicating voice communications and "in response to receiving a notification from the first player indicating that the second player communicated to the first player a communication that violates the community policy, removing the second player from the list such that the second player is prohibited from playing multiplayer games hosted on the game server," as claimed in combination with the remaining limitations.

Additionally, none of the cited references discloses requiring players to agree to a community policy to refrain from sexually explicit communications to be authenticated to play the game, or providing a list that represents those who have agreed to abide by this policy. For example, in each of the references, the only requirements for authentication involve identification (Walker, ¶ 32), payment of a fee (Walker, ¶ 33), or capabilities (Sen, col. 4, lines 46-61). Therefore, these references fail to teach or suggest "wherein having approved credentials further comprises each player having agreed to a community policy to refrain from engaging in sexually explicit communications," or "wherein the list of at least one other player comprises a list of the players that have agreed to abide by the community policy," as claimed.

The remaining references, Perlman and Neuman, are only relevant to various dependent claims, and therefore fail to teach or suggest the limitations of the independent claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all the rejections to the independent claims are now moot and that the independent claims are now allowable over the cited art, such that any of the remaining rejections and assertions made, particularly with respect to all of the dependent claims, do not need to be addressed individually at this time. It will be appreciated, however, that this should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action regarding the cited art or the pending application, including any official notice, and particularly with regard to the dependent claims.^[1]

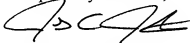
^[1] Instead, Applicant reserves the right to challenge any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise. Furthermore, to the extent that the Examiner has relied on any

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at 801-533-9800.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any of the following fees that may be applicable to this communication, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 23-3178: (1) any filing fees required under 37 CFR § 1.16; and/or (2) any patent application and reexamination processing fees under 37 CFR § 1.17; and/or (3) any post issuance fees under 37 CFR § 1.20. In addition, if any additional extension of time is required, which has not otherwise been requested, please consider this a petition therefore and charge any additional fees that may be required to Deposit Account No. 23-3178.

Dated this 19th day of September, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,



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Official Notice, explicitly or implicitly, Applicant specifically requests that the Examiner provide references supporting any official notice taken. Furthermore, although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.